

[A Greek Restaurateur]

26043

[?], [1939?]

[?] (white

[Atlas Restaurant?]

[318 Main Street?]

[Jacksonville, Florida.?]

[Proprietor?]

[Lillian Steedman, writer?]

[Evelyn Horner, reviser?]

[A GREEK RESTAURANTEUR?]

[For the third time we entered?] the [bright cool restaurant of Tony? ?]. [Flowers?] nodded, the [???] radio [was turned on,?] [and Mr.??] was busy [dusting?] his stock and [arranging?] it more [advantageously.?]

["Well, now about?] today? [Any time to talk?]

"Today [izs?] all right, yes," he said [pleasantly, going on with?] [? ?]. "[I?] [be?] through here now in [minute?]. Everything [isa sold?] by [? ? ?] of success of any business isa by [direct? or??77 indirect? suggestion?]. That isa why I do this." [?Sentence ?]

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The cool air of the large [circulating? fans?] and the [cleanliness?] of the [place? was? very? restful?]. [We? sat? at? one? of? the?] tables to wait. In a very few minutes Mr. [? ?] over and sat down with us.

“How about a piece of pie. [? ?] a cup of coffee, [?] pie [? ?] in my kitchen and I know it isa good. [? ? ?] got this order.” He [?] his tall [? ?] body up and over to [? ?] young couple entering.

“[Well?] , [well?] you get [congratulations?] from me [winning?] the [jitterbug?] contest. That isa something to be a jitter-bug. [?] dis your wife [jitter-bug”?]?”

[? ?] the couple had won a dance contest [?] the [Naval? Air?] [Base?] [Celebration? held? in? Jacksonville? on? May? 12?]. [? ?] talked 2 to them [for some time, then came back and settled himself at our table.?

He [tossed?] back his [long?] [loose? pompadour?] of gray-sprinkled brown hair, [? us?] with large [? eyes? ? ?] the boyhood in [Greece?], [? welll?] it was no different [than?] anybody's childhood. Things were different only in [?] with different [customs?] of the [country?].:” He [?] his [?] mouth [?].

“My papa he was in the hide [an?] leather business and had a steady [demand? for? his? products?]. He make a fair to good living for his family. He supply the home all right, [?] not lavish. [He? set?] a good living and [keep?] healthy by [home?] treatment if nothing [serious?] got the matter.

“I leave my family there when I [am?] in my teens and come to United States, I [come?] with bright hopes, and love of liberty, which is hard to understand for these who have been born here.

“When I leave my family, I never go back to see them, only for a short time while I am in Europe after the World [War?]. Naturally they were [unsettled?] as every country was

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[then?]. My mother she [die?] a long time ago and I have no [?] family living there now, [for?] they all die out.

“When I leave Greece I leave it for good and I am not interested in [conditions?] ever there for I can do nothing for them. I cannot bury them and they wouldn't let me bury them. This [isa?] my country and I never think of Greece as my native country for the [American?] people have given me everything: Greece, [nothing?].

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“When I come here in my teens, I am handicapped not knowing the language. I worked in [two?] different lines. First in a [cleaning establishment?] and then in a [hat?] cleaning parlor. Although I made my expenses I [was?] not [fascinated?] by my work.

“One day a customer who [came?] often to the [shop?] I was working in, asked me how I would like to learn the [restaurant?] business. The idea appealed to me. I could mingle with the customers, and learn everything about the kitchen, too. I joined him. [Well?], now my real work [began?]. I was proud to meet the public, [listen? to? them?], [observe? them?] closely, and notice, above all, what [displeased them?]. I learn very quickly that most of the people are [appreciative?] but there are a few of the other kind. Big dinner or [just?] cup of coffee get [some? service?] from me, though.

“Yes, the [secret?] isa treat everyone nice, call them by name—they like that—and never talk to them unless they seem to want [conversation?]. It [becomes? quite? a? pleasure? to? wait? on? the? public?, but? it? must? be? remembered? that?] [familiarity?] brings [contempt?]. Never [encourage?] [familiarity?].

“There are two [points?] in the restaurant business, service and quality of goods. I have always bought the very best meats and vegetables and did not spare any expense to learn all [about?] foods and their preparation. My dealers know I want the very best at the right price. Well, I [became? succesful?], and saved money.

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"When time come to marry, I marry an American girl. I could not fall in love with a girl from the Old Country for she would not be 4 [modernised?] and would not be able to learn the new bricks and [customs?] of this country. A girl has to be born here and brought up here to [know? all?] that. You hear it is a hard to [teach?] the old dog [new?] tricks [and?] that is a truth. Men come here and make good [success?], then [they? do?] something that [does? them? more? harm?] than good. That is they send back to the Old Country for their [sweetheart?] and bring her here. Then she is a strange and people look at her and think: she is not American through and through, and that hurt his business very much.

"The people make my business good. Why should I not get a wife, if I fall in love, from this people? That [is? what?] I did. I never fall in [love?] with nobody until I fall for this wife I [?]. She help [?] very much. She [is?] smart and she know the customs of the people and business. I have a good wife, she is a good to me and I am good to her, we have a good home, [? we?] built and enjoy.

"Dis house [of? mine? is?] in [Brentwood?] and I keep half of my big [lot?] for my flowers. About 15 years ago I buy the place and have it built [?] like I want, [according?] to my own plans.

"[Those?] flowers on my grounds that I plant myself when I am off on my hours." He [waved?] his hand toward the flowers in the place. "I have 102 sets of dahlias all dark red, and dis large," making a large [? circle?] with [his?] hands. "The [marigolds? are? new? to? me?]. This year is the first time I have experimented[?] with them and they do very nice. [? ?] are the [new? improvement?, so? much? bigger? and? brighter?]. I [like?] the bright [canary?] yellow look they [?]. They looks so good in the business and in [the? home?]."

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[At?] this [point? a? stooped?], shabby old man [tottered? in? slowly?] and took [his?] place at the [far?] end of the [restaurant?]. [?] served him coffee and [came?] back to us, a look of pity and [sympathy on his face?]. [leaning? confidentially? close?] he said in a

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low voice, [That? man?], it [isa? a? shame?] for him. [He use?] [to? be? rich?, now? he? isa? ?]. [?] living and that isa all.

“He [came? here? from? Greece?] about [45?] years ago and [made?] a lot of [money?]. [He? was?] in [Tarpon?] Springs an worked in the sponge business. [Later?] he give up the sponge business and started peanut [vending?] where he [made? a? fortune? at? Tampa?]. The president? [of?] the [State? Bank?] there [?] [a? liking?] to him and let him sell his peanuts in [front?] of the [bank?]. [He? made? \$12,000?] in [four?] years. The president of the bank would often [?] come to him for advice regarding [dinances?] for [he? seemed?] to be a [wisard?] when it [came?] to making good investments.

“[Finally?] he lost all the business [?] he had. He [got? to? gambling?] in a [big? way? and?] the president tried to [influence?] [him?] to [check?] his gambling. The president tried to [make?] him [stick?] to his business but one day [Mike?], that's his [name?], [Mike? ? cussed?] the president [out?] and then he had to move his location from the bank.

“He come to Jacksonville and during the [boom? he? put? \$10,000?] in the [slot?] machine business and went broke. He had left only [500?]. He [sent?] the [\$500?] to his [poor?] [widowed? niece? and?] this left him [no? money?]. He had a gambler's heart and now [he? isa?] a subject of pity to all who know him.

“I tell you this little story so that you will know that he was not a poor man all the time, and to [let?] you know that it was [poor?] 6 [management?] that put him in the condition he is in now.”

The old man [got?] slowly to his feet, [mumbled?] his thanks to [?] in Greek, [who? answered?] in the [same? language?], the [look?] of [sympathy?] [and? pity? on? his? face? once? more?].

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"He has a [peanut? wagon? on? a? busy? downtown? corner?] but the [location? isa?] not a paying one, for it not [every? corner?] that you [can? sell?] enough peanuts to [make?] living. [He? does?] not [make? enough?] to live [on? so?] I give [him? his? ? every?]day and his afternoon coffee. He [isa? feeble?] and [seems?] to live a lonely life. [No? one?] to [care?] but others of his [race?] and some are not [kind?] to him [because?] they [know?] that he [has? gambled?] his everything away.

"Everything [in?] life is relative. Although [many?] people in my [country? say?] that I made a [success?] in business, and not a little [envious?] [that?] they don't [do? so? good?], I feel like almost anyone [? ? ? ? ? by? using? common? sense?]. Of course, [common? sense? means?] never to make [the? same? mistake?] twice, and [learn?] at all times by the mistakes of others.

"Yes, I [made?] good in [America?], and I was happier man when the [? was?] signed and I left the service because I felt I had repaid [?] the country that had done well by me.

"[When? the? World? War? broke?] out I enlisted in the [Navy?]. [Many?] friends told me I was [? ? ? ? ?] that I was proud to wear the [? uniform?]. I still feel proud today, when I think about it. I was fighting for [?] and its ideals. [A? country?] where any one [can?] make good, if he has courage and wants to work.

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rakishly out of his rumpled pants. He apparently feels no concern for he walks calmly to the [cash? register?] where he thanks his [customers?] and tells them to come back.

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“What do you think of the present administration?” we ask mildly.

“My idea of the present administration? Well, that is a very funny question and I don't dare to answer it just so, for that would no do. You are working for the [WPA?] aren't you?”

“That doesn't mean you can't say exactly what you think,” we assure him.

“Well, I think President Roosevelt meant only good for the people and has been able to accomplish a lot of good things all right. But there is an awful lot of money being spent. It's not all getting to the poor people like he wanted it to, either. It is spent in the higher brackets. I can't exactly call it [graft?], but it just doesn't get into the channels that the relief money was intended. 11 “Ah, that is a funny question let's talk about something else. You see, I know that the President means only good for the people and everybody makes[?] mistakes sometimes and you could not [get?] anybody in that office and please everybody.

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He rises abruptly, “Well, this should be all. I will give you anything in this store if you will let me alone. Here take this package of chewing gum and good bye.” He was smiling [as?] he said this, but there was an [undercurrent?] of [seriousness?]. [We? thanked?] his for giving us so much of his time and left hastily.